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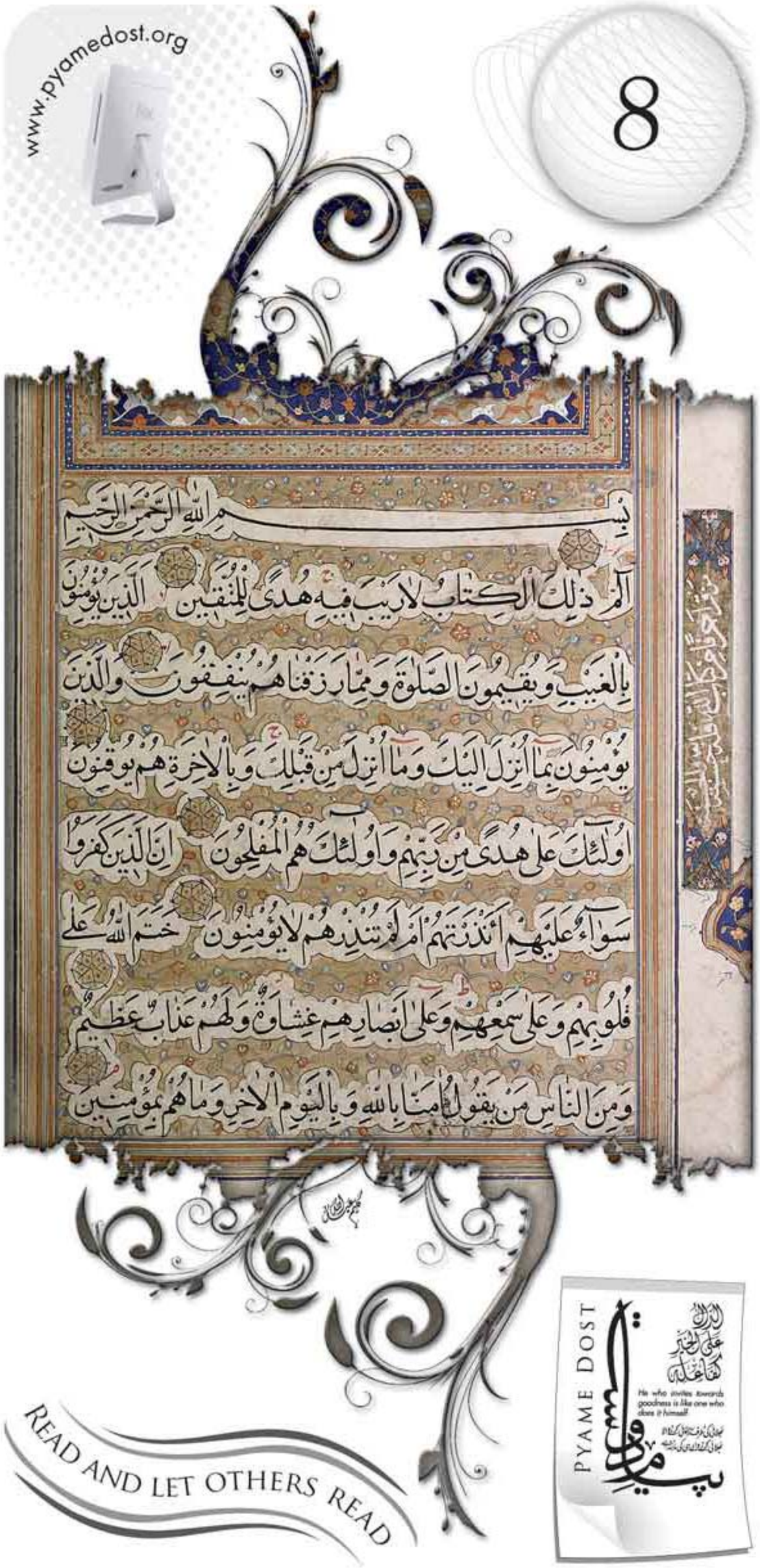

READ AND LET OTHERS READ

The Quran's Ideal Person

In the Light of Quran & Sunnah

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

What is the sign of Eeman (faith)? If one was to make a short list it would be based on 2 things: the Quran and prayer. These two things are the core of religion; one is most vital from the ideological aspect and the other from the practical point of view. If the Quran and prayer become part of our lives, we can consider that both Eeman and Islam have become part of our lives and if our lives are lacking these then we can consider that we have been deprived of both Eeman and Islam. The evidence of their basic importance is in the Quran itself:

Allah tells us in Quran:

*"As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer; never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish."***(7:170)**

To attain the Quran and prayer is not to attain just a collection of words or some outward semblance, but it means the attainment of a great reality which takes over a person's whole being and becomes the purpose of his entire life. When those who truly believe in it read the Quran, this book represents for them a complete truth from its beginning to its end. It is a reality which human knowledge can never fully comprehend. It is that reality which philosophy has been searching for thousands of years but has not been able to grasp. Believers attain it in the book of Allah and this knowledge increases their conviction. When Allah presents the signs in the universe to them and asks them who their Creator is, they spontaneously respond, "You, our Lord!"

When reading the Quran, it should arouse in us the conviction that this is the word of Allah. If its study does not arouse this feeling, then it is no different from the way that the blind or deaf would react to it. When a believer reads the Quran, he reads it as if he is hearing the words of his Lord and is in conversation with Him. The Quran becomes his favourite book which soothes him and stirs his emotions and from which he finds a guiding light that meets all his intellectual and spiritual demands. To grasp the Quran is not a mere intellectual exercise; it amounts to a person finding his Lord

and in fact connecting with Him. Our connection with the book of our Creator and Master of the universe should not be a mere intellectual connection; but it should become the connection between a devotee and his master. When we read the Quran it should create the state of awe and reverence in us that a humble slave feels when he hears the command of his Lord. When reading it, our hearts should melt and our voice become hushed and our whole being from head to toe should become humble and submissive and ready to bow down to Him. Allah tells us in Quran:

"Allah has revealed (from time to time) the most beautiful message in the form of a Book consistent with itself, (Yet) repeating (its teaching in various aspects): the skins of those who fear their Lord tremble thereat; then their skins and their hearts do soften to the celebration of Allah's praises. Such is the guidance of Allah: He guides therewith whom He pleases but such as Allah leaves to stray can have none to guide." **(39:23)**

Remember that people who are unfamiliar with the Quran are not just those who ignore it as if they do not know it and as if it has no connection with their lives; in fact those people are also deprived of it for whom the Book merely provides suitable words for their optimism or for whom it is merely a subject for intellectual thought and argument. It is totally possible that a person may impress thousands of people with his knowledge of the Quran, but remain deprived of its blessings. If the life of a daee (one who invites people) to the Quran is devoid of its practice, it is also a form of being deprived of the Quran. The only person who can attain the Quran is one who has heard the Quran in his heartbeats, who has perceived the realities mentioned in the Quran as if he is seeing them with his own eyes and who has found it written in the book of his heart. The one who attains the Quran is the one whose dead spirit has been revived with the Quran, for whom it is book that removes the rust on his heart and for whom it becomes a guiding light with which he walks. Those people have truly grasped the message of the Quran whose hearts tremble when they read it and they receive it with tears. The words of Allah the exalted describe their state:

"Whenever the Signs of (Allah) Most Gracious were rehearsed

to them they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears." **(Quran 19:58)**

Here, we should understand very well that this world is merely a testing ground; this means that everything has been made in such a way that it can either be a medium of admonition or a means of trial. The same applies with the Book of God. Without doubt the Quran is a guidance, but the cleaner a person's face is, the cleaner its reflection in the mirror and hence we will get only as much from the Quran as we desire to attain.

PRAYER

Prayer is the foundation pillar of religion and without it a person's Eeman (faith) is not true. While it is a source of salvation, true benefit is only derived from that prayer which has khushoo (humility, submission and concentration) as has been told to us in the Quran:

"Successful indeed are the believers. Who are humble in their prayers." **(23:1-2)**

Let us look at the prayer which has signs of khushoo in it.

1.Firstly it means prayer that is offered in such a way that it becomes a caretaker and protector of our actions. Allah tells us in the Quran:

"Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers especially the middle prayer and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind)" **(2:238)**

Here, safeguarding means that a person abstains and protects himself from any habit or occupation which deprives him of the ability to pray timely and in congregation. Presenting oneself for prayer at its appropriate time demonstrates that when the master calls, the slave is always willing to respond immediately to his master's call. This is proof of a strong commitment in the relationship. To be keen to pray as soon as the time comes demonstrates that a person has given Allah the foremost position in his life. Congregational prayer (the setting up of the rows) is actually the time to stand in the court of Allah. Whoever is not present at this time in the house of Allah is confirming that the call of his desires is dearer to him than the call of Allah, particularly the Fajr prayer which is a prayer of registering one's presence.

The person who does not perform it is putting himself at risk of Allah withdrawing His support and protection and leaving him undefended against Satan's attacks.

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"He who prayed the morning prayer (in congregation) he is in fact under the protection of Allah. And it can never happen that Allah should demand anything from you in connection with the protection (that He guarantees) and one should not get it."

(Muslim)

Fajr prayer is the forerunner of all the other prayers. Every morning when the light of the morning heralds the rising sun it presents two kinds of opportunities to a person; one is worldly preoccupation and the other is work for the Hereafter. Right at that time the muezzin calls out: *"Come to the prayer, come to the success."* This call invites a person to come to Allah's house before starting his daily routine and to perform Fajr. He reaffirms his pledge to Allah that he will use the next few moments to achieve success in the Hereafter, and that he will, this coming day, worship his Lord. Right at that time another caller calls. This is the call of Satan, a person's declared enemy, who whispers into the heart of a person that he should devote this day for only worldly preoccupations. The first call resonates and falls on deaf ears. In a population of thousands there are only a few who set off for the mosque and these are mainly the ones who are old or who are not capable of any other work. As for the other call, everyone pays attention to it; the farmer goes to his fields, the trader takes his big bunch of keys and sets off to his place of business, employees start getting ready to go to their workplace. Many other people to whom only their rest is dear continue to sleep comfortably in their soft beds at this blissful time. How heedless is man that he deprives himself of the time when there is the greatest likelihood of being granted what he wants! A door opens for people everyday but the foolish person closes it upon himself.

2.The second sign of a prayer performed with khushoo is that a person's bowing down in prayer becomes symbolic of his submission in life. His ruku (bowing) and sujood (prostrating) is actually a practical acknowledgement of the

fact that he has submitted his whole life to Allah and that he has bowed completely to Allah's commands. For this reason it has been said in the Quran:

"Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you and establish Regular Prayer, for Prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt. And Allah knows the (deeds) that you do." **(29:45)**

Prayer is not a mere ritual act of worship; it is about surrendering one's whole self and all that one has to Allah and that too, with full consciousness, telling Him: "My Master, command me and I will obey." If despite this admission, you see that congregational prayer in the mosque does not become the purpose of a person's life, then it means that he is still deprived of a prayer with khushoo.

3.The third sign of a prayer with khushoo is that when a person is busy in praying, he feels his Lord very close to him.

"Bow down in adoration and bring yourself closer (to Allah)!"

(Quran: 96:19)

This is a state which cannot be expressed in words; in this state, a person feels that he is seeing an unseen reality with complete conviction, that he is feeling the most amount of love for something he should fear the most. Through prayer, Allah has arranged for us the means of achieving closeness to Him in this very world. In prayer, when a person becomes attentive to Allah, he becomes spiritually attached to Him.

LASTLY

Every person who has read the Quran knows all this very well. Rather than only making promises to others, each one of us has to promise himself that he will act upon whatever knowledge he possesses. If we can only make this pledge, then believe me, the doors of Allah's Paradise will be opened for us in such a way that even while alive we will be able to smell its fragrance. And if we do not change ourselves after knowing all this, then God alone knows what makes us daring enough to disobey the Lord of the worlds!

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